

AG NEWS



Utah Department of
Agriculture and Food

June 2007

Utah Department of Agriculture & Food Proposed Discretionary Funding Plan – FY-08

We have reviewed criteria and identified areas of concern with each Division Director in the use of the 1.5% discretionary funds appropriated by the 2007 Legislature. The plan has been submitted to the Utah Department of Human Resource Management for review and input. We will notify Utah Department of Agriculture & Food employees through our department newsletter prior to implementation of our plan.

Our plan will be addressing the following areas:

First – provide step increases to retain Environmental Health Scientist (EHS) positions that are -20.80% below market. Our agency has had a 100% turnover, during the last 3 years, with EHS positions in the Salt Lake office. In 2006, four out of 19 employees left voluntarily, due primarily to salaries.

Second – provide salaries for hard to fill and/or retain positions, such as Veterinary positions that are -18.60% below market. When recruiting for veterinarian positions, the top candidates have declined because of the salary range being offered.

Third – provide step increases or bonuses to exceptional performers meeting their individual performance plans, the goals and expectations of their Divisions and the objectives of the Department of Agriculture & Food.

Fourth – we plan to carry-over a portion of the 1.5% Discretionary Funds to be used for critical issues and ‘hot spot’ areas as they are identified during the balance of the year.

PHASE 1 OF JAPANESE BEETLE ERADICATION PROGRAM CONCLUDES WITH WIDESPREAD PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE

Residents praised for following no-garden rule

Orem -- Phase 1 of the state's largest Japanese Beetle eradication effort has concluded with outstanding cooperation by the estimated 2,000 residents in three Central Orem neighborhoods. More than 450 acres of lawns, flower and garden areas and vacant fields have been sprayed in an attempt to wipe out the destructive beetle that poses a statewide threat. Phase 2 of the treatment is set to begin July 5 with the treatment of trees and shrubs and other leafy material in a 250 acre area.

"Of the 2,000 homeowners living in the treatment area, only about a dozen have refused treatment, or opted for the more costly alternative treatment due to health issues," said Plant Industry Director, Clair Allen. Under provisions of the program, residents who have a signed doctor's orders may elect to pay for the alternative treatment. The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food earlier enacted an Insect Emergency Declaration, allowing for 100 percent treatment of the infested area.

Utah Commissioner of Agriculture and Food, Leonard Blackham, also offers praise for the many residents who followed the order to not plant vegetable gardens during the three-year spray program in order to help improve its chances for success.

"I wish to thank the many people who sacrificed and did not plant a garden this year in order to give the project the highest potential for success," said Commissioner Blackham. "Gardens cannot be sprayed as effectively as other areas, and they may serve as breeding grounds for the beetle. A few gardens were planted, but their numbers and size do not appear to threaten the success of the program, Blackham added.

The Orem Neighborhoods in Action committee (NIA) is organizing to distribute excess vegetables from a county garden to those who were not able to grow a garden this year. Contact NIA at: (801) 229-7194.

Recent warm temperatures have triggered the emergence of the adult beetle from underground. As of June 29, 2007 a total of 145 Japanese beetles have been collected from traps placed in a concentrated area of the treatment zone. Program Manager, Clint Burfitt said this is not unexpected, since this is the time of year when the beetles can be seen by residents, and when they do most of their damage to foliage. It appears, he said, that the

beetles are concentrated in one area.

Phase 2 treatment of trees, shrubs and other leafy material is intended to kill the adult beetles as they emerge from underground. More than 1,200 traps have been placed in Utah County this year.

As of June 29 no other Japanese beetles have been detected in traps placed in other areas of Utah County, or in other counties in Utah.

The Orem infestation threatens the state's \$150 million landscape nursery and fruit industries as well as Utah's enjoyment of shade trees, flower and vegetable gardens.



Above: Project Manager, Clint Burfitt monitors Japanese beetle lawn treatment by TrueGreen ChemLawn employees. Overwhelming support and cooperation was expressed by the residents in the treatment area of Central Orem.

